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ABSTRACT

This study examined 14 sixth grade teachers' opinions about classroom management, gathering information from an online discussion group conducted during the summer of 1997. Researchers selected and analyzed the teachers' opinions using content analysis according to the tenets of three classroom management theories: (1) the non-interventionist (based on a philosophical and psychological belief system commonly called humanistic or student-centered); (2) the interactionalist (based on both behavior and feelings); and (3) the interventionist (based on the basic tenets of behavioral psychology). The data analysis used seven basic questions developed by Levin and Nolan (1991) (e.g., who has primary responsibility for controlling student behavior?; who should develop rules and standards for appropriate classroom behavior?; how quickly should the teacher intervene when management problems occur?; and what teacher power bases should be used most frequently to control student behavior?). According to the results, teachers' reflections on classroom management represented various approaches. Nine teachers used the interventionist approach, three teachers used the interactionalist approach, and one teacher used both. None used the non-interventionist approach. Novice and male teachers perceived their classroom management style as interventionist. (Contains 17 references.) (SM)

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Teachers' Reflections on Classroom Management

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Classroom management relates to preparing specific rules, establishing a warm classroom climate, and maintaining orderly environment with problem solving strategies. According to Doyle (1986) the study of classroom management is closely related to research on effective teaching, teacher thinking, and classroom discourse. Doyle (1986) claims that "classroom management should be viewed as one major dimension of effective teaching, rather than synonymous with it. …the centrality of classroom management to the teacher's role, as well as its relationship with learning, make it worth our while to inquire further about teacher behaviors that produce well-managed classrooms"(p.342). Emmer and Everston (1981) defined effective classroom management as "teacher behaviors that produce high levels of student involvement in classroom activities , minimal amounts of students behaviors that interfere with the teacher's or other students' work, and efficient use of instructional time" (p.342).

Classroom control, discipline, and classroom management are the terms that are used interchangeably in the literature of classroom management. According to Stanford et al. (1983) the concept of classroom management is broader than the notion of student discipline. Classroom management includes all the things teachers must do to foster student involvement and cooperation in classroom activities and to establish a productive working environment. According to Doyle (1986) classroom management refers to the

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actions and strategies which are used by teachers to solve the problem of order in the classroom.

Classroom control seems to relate to the exercise of teacher power and setting the rules for appropriate behavior and performance within the classroom. These rules can be determined by students, teachers or both (Levin, and Nolan, 1991). On the other hand, Charles (1985) perceives discipline as teacher influence that does three things: 1) keeps students on task, 2) helps them establish responsible behavior, and 3) insists on their exhibiting good human relations. Gloeckler and Simpson (1988) (Cited in Smith and Misra,1992) defines classroom discipline as "the consistent and continued organization of behavior for the purposes of teaching acceptable ways of behaving in a group situation, for academic achievement, or for personal productive living" (p132-133).

Smith and Misra (1992) summarized research results and highlighted the importance of classroom discipline in a regular classroom with the following items. First, it relates to teacher effectiveness. Second, discipline was seen as a major problem by public especially in the last decade upon the increase of drug use among school children (Elam and Gallup, 1989). Third, discipline problems are the major cause of referrals made by regular educators to special education. Fourth, poorly selected disciplinary techniques have a negative influence on students and teachers. In addition, discipline has been reported as the prime stress producing factor in teaching (Abernathy, Manera, & Wrigth, 1985).

It was proposed by some researchers that when teachers develop their sense and understanding of the models of disciplines, they will guide their students to internalize those behaviors automatically. Charles (1991), for example, claims that the ultimate

purpose of discipline in classrooms should also be to encourage students to develop self-control over their behavior. When teachers begin to understand and apply the appropriate models of the classroom discipline with the purpose of promoting their students' awareness of self-discipline, they will not only help students internalize this behavior in classrooms, but also will they eventually guide them to carry this behavior "beyond the walls".

Over the past 30 years, many studies have been conducted on classroom management. Kounin's (1970) research has been taken as a first study about classroom management (Emmer and Everston, 1981; Stanford et al., 1983; Doyle, 1986). Stanford et al. (1983) summarized the results of the studies as:

> At the end of each study, measures of student achievement and behavior were used to identify groups of very effective and less effective classrooms' managers. Although both the effective and the less effective groups included teachers with varied teaching style, personalities, and experience, the two groups differed in the classroom strategies they used. Moreover, the roots of a teacher's success or problems in managing a class could often be seen in the first weeks of school (p.56).

As Doyle (1983) mentioned teachers' classroom management strategies are important to keep and maintain a healthy classroom climate for effective teaching. These strategies can have either practical or theoretical and/or philosophical backgrounds. Brophy and Rohrkemper' s (1981) study (cited in Jones and Jones, 1990) illustrated that few of the teachers had a clear, consistent philosophy or understanding of how to manage their classrooms. Jones and Jones (1990) believe that teachers can use different methods to develop their own philosophies and practice.

Three Classroom Management Theories

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) took various psychological interpretations of child development and categorized them into three basic beliefs:

1. The child develops from an inner unfolding of potential
2. The child develops as a result of external conditions
3. The child develops from the interaction of inner and outer forces (p.11).

According to Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) the first item reflects that the child has an inner drive which needs to find its expression in real world. The second item refuse to admit any such inner force and instead emphasize what the outer environment does to the human organism to cause it to develop in its peculiar way. Third item presuppose that internal and external forces are constantly interacting and focuses on what the individual does to modify the external environment in return does to shape the child.

Using these explanations of social learning Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) labeled three school of psychological thought which are Non-interventionist, the Interventionist, and the Interactionalist.

Levin and Nolan (1991) claim that "theoretical approaches to classroom management are useful to teachers because they offer a basis whereby student and teacher behavior can be analyzed, understood, and controlled" (p.79). They developed seven basic questions regarding these three theories. These are:

- Who has the primary responsibility for controlling student behavior in the classroom?
- Who should develop the rules and standards for appropriate classroom behavior?
- Which is more important, overt behavior or inner thoughts and feelings.?
- How important are individual student differences in dealing with management problems?

- How quickly should the teacher intervene when management problem occur?
- What teacher power bases should be used most frequently to control student behavior?

The Non-interventionist classroom management model is based on a philosophical and psychological belief system that is commonly referred to as humanistic or student-centered (Levin and Nolan, 1991). In this theory, the basic assumptions are:

- Students have the primary responsibility for control
- Students develop rules with guidance of teachers
- Primary and major focus on inner feelings and thoughts
- Major emphasis on the importance of individual differences
- Teacher allows time for students to control their own behavior
- Types of intervention techniques are non-verbal moves, private conferences, skills and I messages
- Most compatible power bases on referent and expert (p.95).

The Interactionalist models of classroom management are based on both behavior and feelings. The assumptions are:

- Primary responsibility for control shared by student and teacher
- Teacher develops the rules with some student input
- Initial focus on behavior than feelings and thoughts
- Moderate emphasis is given to individual differences
- Teacher allows some time to control own behavior but protect group
- Types of intervention techniques used are coping skills, consequences, group meetings, and anecdotal records
- Most compatible power bases are expert and legitimate

The Interventionist systems of classroom management are based on the basic tenets of behavioral psychology (Levin and Nolan, 1991). The basic assumptions are:

- Teacher has the primary responsibility for control
- Teacher develops the rules
- Primary focus on behavior
- Minor emphasis on individual differences
- Teacher moves quickly to redirect behavior

- Types of intervention techniques used are rewards, punishments, token economy, contracting
- Most compatible power bases are rewards and coercive

Classroom climate is important for enhancing learning. Students should feel comfortable and valuable in this environment. If schools are healthy and have achievement orientated culture, this reflects the classrooms' climates. Theories provide a basis to develop effective classroom management techniques, which help both students and teachers to make the teaching and learning process better.

Martin and Baldwin (1994) did research to investigate the differences between the beliefs of experienced teachers and novice teachers regarding classroom management styles. They classified beliefs on a continuum that reflects the degree of teacher power over students. The continuum is categorized into three segments; the Non-interventionist, the Interactionalist, and the Interventionist. They found that novice teachers scored significantly more interventionist in their perceptions of classroom management style than experienced teachers. Again, Martin andYin (1997) conducted research which is called "Attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management style: Differences between male and female teachers." They found that male teachers scored more interventionist than their counterparts on all the subscales (Rule consciousness, perfectionism, dominance, abstractedness, openness to change, and impression management) of the ABCC (Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control).

There are a couple of research studies concerning these three theories. These studies are mostly quantitative. It was thought that teachers' opinions could also be learned through qualitative research by using Levin and Nolan's (1991) seven basic questions, which are useful for articulating beliefs about classroom management. The aim

of this study is to find out how teachers are describing their classroom discipline and to analyze their discipline type according to the Non-interventionist, the the Interactionalist and the Interventionist classroom management theories.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

In this study, fourteen sixth grade elementary school teachers' opinions were gathered from an online discussion group during Summer of 1997. These opinions were selected and analyzed by content analysis. Data were collected from fourteen sixth grade elementary school teachers. The gender and age of the participants was not a focus of this study. Data were analyzed by content analysis according to tenets of the three classroom management theories: the Non-interventionist, the Interactionalist and the Interventionist. When each narrative was analyzed, the seven basic questions, which were developed by Levin and Nolan (1991) were used.

Conclusion and Summary

Teachers' reflections on classroom management in regard to classroom discipline represented various approaches. The data were analyzed based on each case by making inferences from teachers' opinions to match with the classroom management approaches: the Noninterventionist, the Interactionalist, and the Interventionist. When data were analyzed, Nevin and Nolan's (1991) seven basic questions were used. It was found that nine teachers (64.2%) were using the Interventionist classroom management approach, three teachers (21.4%) were using the Interactionalist classroom management approach, only a single teacher (7.1%) was using both the Interactionalist and the Interventionist.

However, It was difficult to comment on one of the teacher's approach since it did not match with any of these approaches.

Although in this research teachers' gender and age are not considered because of the anonymity of respondents, these findings are somehow similar to Martin and Baldwin (1994), and Martin and Yin's (1997) findings that novice teachers and male teachers perceive their classroom management style as interventionist.

Based on the data analysis, the Interventionist classroom management approach is the most frequently used one by the teachers. It seems that teachers still determine the rules by themselves and like to run the classroom with these rules. They also support or prevent behaviors with reinforcements.

It is also found interesting that none of fourteen teachers was using the Non-interventionist approach although the importance of humanistic approach is mentioned in many educational environments such as in many educational journals, books, seminars, and courses. However, there might be some other reasons for the teachers not to consider the Non-interventionist approach (which is more humanistic and student-centered) as more preferred approach in classrooms. Another study is needed to investigate this topic.

Through our observations, readings, and discussing with teachers face to face, we realized that the humanistic approach takes time to apply perfectly in the classroom. Many teachers think that dealing with students' feelings distract academic activities in the classroom. Some teachers think that dealing with students' feelings should be one of the responsibilities of school counselors. Therefore, they do not want to spend time on it. In addition, they do not find it appropriate for crowded classrooms due to time constraints. The reason can be as Doyle (1986) mentioned that the topic of discipline was taken up by

clinical psychologists interested in counseling, mental health, and behavior identification (p.392).

Aksoy (1998) conducted a study in order to learn the opinions of Turkish upper elementary students what a "good teacher" is. She found that students' responses reflect that they want teachers to treat them as human beings with emotions and feelings. It can be assumed that they want to have the Non-interventionist classroom management.

In conclusion, it is not necessary to use only one approach or one method for classroom management. It is better to be aware of all methods and approaches and apply them in appropriate situations. Classroom management depends on many things such as class size, the place where school is located, socio-economic status of students and their aspiration for education, and students' personal characteristics. In addition to being aware of all these theories that they provide basis for classroom management models, teachers can display some basic behaviors which help classroom discipline. We agree with Ban (1994) claims that teachers should have a caring attitude and a deep concern toward students. They should be fair but firm. In addition, they should rely on praise, trust, and encouragement in the classroom. Moreover, they should be aware of being model in front of the students.

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